



MUSLIM SPORTS  
FOUNDATION

# Active Sunnah

*In Movement there is Blessing  
(Fil Harakah Barakah)*

## 2024-2030

Our community-led strategy to enrich  
the lives of the British Muslim community  
through sport and physical activity



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# A word from our Chair



I am honoured to present our strategy for the next six years, a period that marks our commitment to enhancing the lives of British Muslims through sports and physical activity, who are unfortunately the least active faith community. This strategy sets us on a path to transform not only our organisation but support and work with the entire ecosystem that surrounds us. We have drawn from our past achievements and coupled them with forward looking insights to shape our vision.

Our strategy, Active Sunnah – In Movement there is Blessing (Fil Harakah Barakah), highlights the importance of physical activity within Islam. In a world where physical activity is increasingly recognised as a catalyst for positive change, the proverb, Fil Harakah Barakah “In Movement there is Blessing” stands as a testament to the transformative potential of physical activity and sports.

We wholeheartedly embrace our traditional philosophy, viewing movement not merely as a physical endeavour but as a vehicle for divine

blessing and societal wellbeing. This commitment is aligned with Sport England’s “Uniting the Movement” campaign, aiming to foster unity, inclusivity, and positive change through sports and physical activity.

I invite all our stakeholders including the British Muslim community to join us in making regular physical activity an integral part of everyone’s lives. Together, we can enrich our British Muslim communities, enhance lives, and build a stronger, more active future for British Muslims, reversing the trend that currently makes them the least active faith community.

Currently, the opportunities to engage in sports and physical activities, and to enjoy their benefits, are overly dependent on background, gender, socio-economic status, and geographical location, and even religion can be a factor. This is a trend we are committed to changing. We support creating an environment where the Muslim faith, which traditionally promotes physical activity, is not a barrier but a catalyst for participation.

We also acknowledge that some programmes in the past may have appeared more as a form of faith washing rather than about bringing about real change. Our commitment is to move beyond superficial initiatives and focus on creating substantial and meaningful opportunities for British Muslims to engage in sports and physical activity in the long term. We aim to ensure that our programmes genuinely contribute to improving the physical and mental wellbeing of our community members, irrespective of their background, and make a lasting impact in our pursuit of a healthier, more active society.

We are determined to tackle this and unlock the advantages of sport and physical activity for everyone. Regardless of background, faith or circumstance, we are committed to creating a level playing field where all British Muslims have equal access to the benefits of sports and physical wellbeing. Together, we can break down barriers and ensure that no one is left behind in our mission to build a healthier and more active community.

**Sajid Hussain**  
Chair



# Our Vision

“**Empowering British Muslims through  
inclusive sport and physical activity**”



**RIPE** *REACH > INSPIRE > PROMOTE > EMPOWER*



**Reach:** we aim to reach every British Muslim, fostering inclusivity and diversity in sport and physical activity.

**Inspire:** we inspire individuals to embrace an active lifestyle, igniting a passion for wellbeing.

**Promote:** we are committed to actively promoting and advocating physical activity within British Muslim communities.

**Empower:** we empower grassroots British Muslim communities with equal access and opportunities in sport and recreation, building a healthier, stronger future.

This vision is our commitment to enriching lives, fostering unity, and promoting wellbeing among British Muslims, ensuring that sport and physical activity are integral to their lives.

Together, we create a more active and harmonious society.



# MUSLIM SPORTS FOUNDATION

## Mission Statement

**Uniting British Muslim communities, breaking barriers and thriving together ensuring equality and opportunity.**

Our mission is to break down barriers, inspire change and create inclusive opportunities for British Muslims in sport and physical activity.

We are determined to level the playing field for neglected communities, enabling equal access and opportunity.

We are committed to counteracting historic barriers and negative stereotypes, through campaigns, facilitation, relationship building and empowerment of our organic community eco-systems.

Our goal is to create a sustainable legacy of movement, wellbeing, unity and equality, for British Muslims in every sport.

# Our Values

These values are the cornerstones of our organisation's mission and guide us in our journey to empower individuals, foster inclusivity, and drive positive change through sports and physical activity.

## Respect

# 1

Treating everyone with respect and dignity, valuing differences and promoting fair play.

## Unity

# 2

Working towards creating a united and harmonious community releasing the hidden potential and avenues towards healthy living and mental wellbeing.

## Compassion

# 3

Expressing deep care and understanding for individuals, families and communities, nurturing an environment that promotes holistic wellbeing and cohesion.

## Authenticity

# 4

Representing our community's beliefs and values, striving for genuine engagement and acceptance of individual and group identities.



**Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand.**

**Nelson Mandela**









# ACTIVE SUNNAH



**SPORT HAS THE POWER  
TO CHANGE THE WORLD**



The visionary concept of Active Sunnah, pioneered by the Muslim Sports Foundation, highlights the importance of physical activity within Islam. This innovative initiative resonates with a diverse audience, with a particular focus on youth, families, women, and institutions. At its core, the essence of the Active Sunnah is profound: our tradition is not restrictive but rather an expansive canvas inviting all to participate. Central to this concept lies the principle of “hifdh un-nafs,” the preservation of life. Life, regarded as a sacred trust, demands protection, and the imperative to embrace an active and vibrant lifestyle for the holistic wellbeing of all is paramount. It is a call to honour the sanctity of existence, a responsibility that rests upon everyone.

Within the spectrum of religious denominations, the Muslim community has been noted as one of the least active. British Muslims constitute 6.5% of the total population of England and Wales. Active Sunnah emerges as a catalyst, dynamically initiating enduring cultural transformations. Its strength is evident through

meticulously crafted campaigns. A prime example of this is our groundbreaking Friday prayer sermon. In our first year, over 130 Mosques and institutes simultaneously delivered lectures highlighting the importance of healthy and active lifestyles, reaching a staggering three hundred thousand individuals. This initiative radiates the vital message of embracing a health-conscious and active lifestyle, fostering a positive impact within the Muslim community and beyond.

“Ansar,” the direct delivery arm of MSF, in Arabic means “helpers or supporters,” a term deeply embedded in Islamic history that reflects the Muslim identity of aiding those in need. Recognising the challenges many clubs and organisations face in sustaining a volunteer base due to time, financial, and networking constraints, MSF is committed to offering our expertise and insights to these organisations. We understand these organisations play a pivotal role in boosting physical activity among British Muslims and our support is designed to help them overcome these hurdles and achieve a sustainable model.

# How? A Community Ecosystem



**SOW**



**NURTURE**



**BLOSSOM**



**RE-SEED**

We strategically plant the seeds to engage deprived and neglected communities at their epicentre. Listening to and implementing the need of grass root communities, removing historic barriers towards physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing.

We provide bespoke, innovative guidance and initiatives from within a robust support mechanism for all partners and stakeholders, cultivating the communal landscape and uncovering its hidden potential.

As our initiatives take root and grow, we reap the flourishing benefits of ground-up, holistic and organic strategy. Sustain and advance engagement initiatives on a local, regional and national scale.

We utilise all established resource to re-invest within the community eco-system, creating a self-sustainable cycle of identification, engagement, solution and implementation for the most deprived segments of society. This approach promotes sustainability and builds resilience in the community through the power of sport and physical activity.

# MSF Collaborative Framework

Our aim is to work together with national and local organisations to tackle historical inequalities in sport and physical activity. Creating opportunities for diverse and often marginalised communities.

## **Epicentre:**

Through our innovative and authentic engagement strategies we will continue to bridge the gap tackling inequalities at the heart of the community.

## **Inner Circle:**

We have a proven track record of influencing, engaging, supporting and mobilising the essential core elements of networks. We will drive the mechanism for equality and participation within all segments of our community.

## **Wider Eco-System:**

We will strive to bridge the gap between national and local agencies in order to address historic sporting disparities. Thus, creating opportunity for those stemming from diverse and often deprived communities.







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# What We Do



**Innovative  
Engagement**



**Community Sports and  
Family Inclusivity**



**Grassroots  
Provisions**



**Awareness  
Campaigns**



**Collaboration**



**Advocacy**



**Educational Programmes**



**Research and Insight**

# Tackling the Big Five: United Through Movement

Address historical inequalities by creating ground-breaking, vibrant, and sustainable networks of programmes and initiatives providing sport and physical activity for all. This will ensure that British Muslims have a voice and an equitable pathway to overcome barriers.



# Strategic Objectives



## Increased Participation

Target areas of high deprivation focusing on individuals who are deemed inactive from all demographics. Build on our existing collaborations and seek new partnerships with Mosques, Madrassahs, clubs, community institutes, national governing bodies, and active partnerships.



## Sustainable Projects

Establish a self-sustainable community eco-system via our sow, nurture, blossom, re-seed methodology. Grow and diversify our revenue streams to provide increased investment into our projects, programmes, campaigns, and infrastructure.



## Coaches & Volunteer Workforce

Provide coaches and volunteers with opportunities that match their interests, skills and aspirations and equip them to learn new things, expand their network or gain new qualifications and support them with mentoring and coaching.



## Places

Creating a nationwide network of active hubs and reviving dilapidated spaces through community activation and collaboration. Teaming up with community organisations, educational institutions, recreational facilities, and delivering essential services to neglected communities.





### **Solid Governance**

Maintain high levels of governance to ensure that the organisation is in good hands, managing risk and functioning at its highest regulatory potential. Demonstrate transparency, responsiveness, equity, inclusivity, effectiveness and accountability at all times.



### **Ansar Delivery**

Expanding on Ansar's success, we will grow inclusive initiatives for individuals and families targeting areas with historical inequalities. Through collaboration, integration into daily life, and bespoke delivery programmes, our goal is nationwide establishment of fully inclusive physical activity initiatives.



### **Communications and Campaigns**

Enlighten the community through successful campaigns such as "Active Sunnah". Extend our grassroots efforts addressing historic barriers, false perceptions, and negative stereotypes. Through consultancy within the sporting landscape, we will continue to advocate for equitable distribution of services, opportunities, and resources.



### **Digital and Data**

Achieve a high level of digital maturity as an organisation, where we effectively use data and technology for effective intervention and overall performance.

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# Strategic Audiences

Our new strategy is participant-focussed to ensure that opportunities are provided to all segments.

Five key target audiences we identified were Community, Mosques and Madrassah, Sports Councils and System Partners, Local Councils and Leisure Centres and Health Sector. For each target audience, we developed a comprehensive strategy based on a robust analysis to identify recommendations that will have the most impact on activity levels.



## Community

Build a community that embraces lifelong physical activity habits and encourages physical literacy for sustained wellbeing.



## Mosques and Madrassah

Promote physical activity and sports within Mosques and Madrassahs to enhance the lives of British Muslims.



## Sports Councils and System Partners

Provide guidance, support and collaboration with the system for better engagement with the British Muslim community who for many is an invisible community.



## Local Council and Leisure Centres

Partner with local councils to participate into community planning and services and collaborate on joint campaigns to promote health and wellness in the community. Use leisure centres as venues and ensuring accessibility and suitability for a diverse range of participants.



## Health Sector

Develop sector endorsed initiatives that highlight the benefits of increased physical activity, collaborate on public health campaigns and integrate physical activity into prevention, health advice and treatments.



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# **A BIG Audacious Goal for 2030**

**Bridging the gap in physical activity participation among  
British Muslims compared to other national  
demographics**

Inactive: 20%

Fairly Active: 10%

Active: 70%





# Double Diamond Approach

## DISCOVER Research

DIVERGENCE

### Design the right thing

#### Objective:

To fully understand the context, challenges and opportunities related to physical activity and sports participation among British Muslims.

#### Actions:

Conduct community surveys and focus groups to gather insights from various demographics within the British Muslim community.

Analyse existing data and research on sports participation trends and barriers in the community.

Engage with Mosques and Madrassahs, community organisations, coaches, volunteers, sports clubs and other stakeholders to gain diverse perspectives.

#### Outcomes:

A comprehensive understanding of the current state of physical activity and sports participation among British Muslims.  
Identification of key barriers, motivations and opportunities.

#### Objective:

To clearly articulate the main challenges and areas of focus for the strategy.

#### Actions:

Synthesise findings from the Discover phase to identify core issues. Host workshops with key stakeholders to prioritise challenges and goals. Develop clear problem statements or objectives that the strategy aims to address.

#### Outcomes:

A set of defined problems or challenges to be addressed.  
  
Prioritised list of objectives for the strategy.

## DEFINE Synthesis

CONVERGENT

## DEVELOP

Ideation

DIVERGENCE

## Design things right

### Objective:

To generate a wide range of ideas and potential solutions for increasing physical activity and sports participation.

### Actions:

Brainstorming sessions involving community members, experts and stakeholders. Develop pilot programmes or initiatives based on innovative ideas. Explore partnerships and collaboration framework with various organisations.

### Outcomes:

A diverse pool of potential solutions and initiatives. Concepts for pilot programmes and initiatives ready for testing.

### Objective:

To implement and evaluate the most promising solutions.

### Actions:

Select initiatives based on feasibility, impact potential and alignment with community needs. Develop implementation plans, including timelines, resources and responsibilities. Monitor and evaluate the impact of implemented solutions. Adjust and scale successful initiatives based on feedback and results.

### Outcomes:

Successfully launched initiatives that address the defined challenges. Measurable impact on sports participation and community engagement. A scalable and adaptable strategy for continued success.

## DELIVER

Implementation

CONVERGENT





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[www.muslimsportsfoundation.org.uk](http://www.muslimsportsfoundation.org.uk)

***"The service you do for others is the rent you pay for your  
room here on earth."***

**Muhammad Ali**